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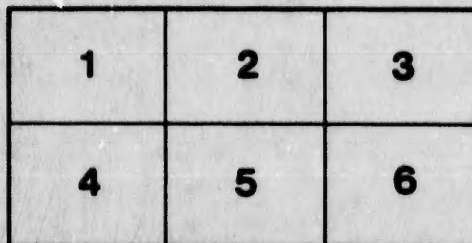
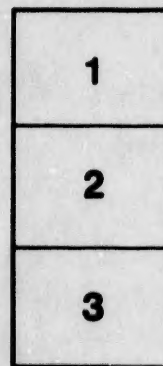
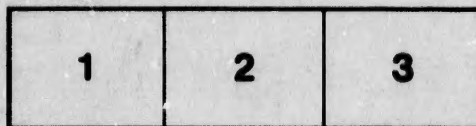
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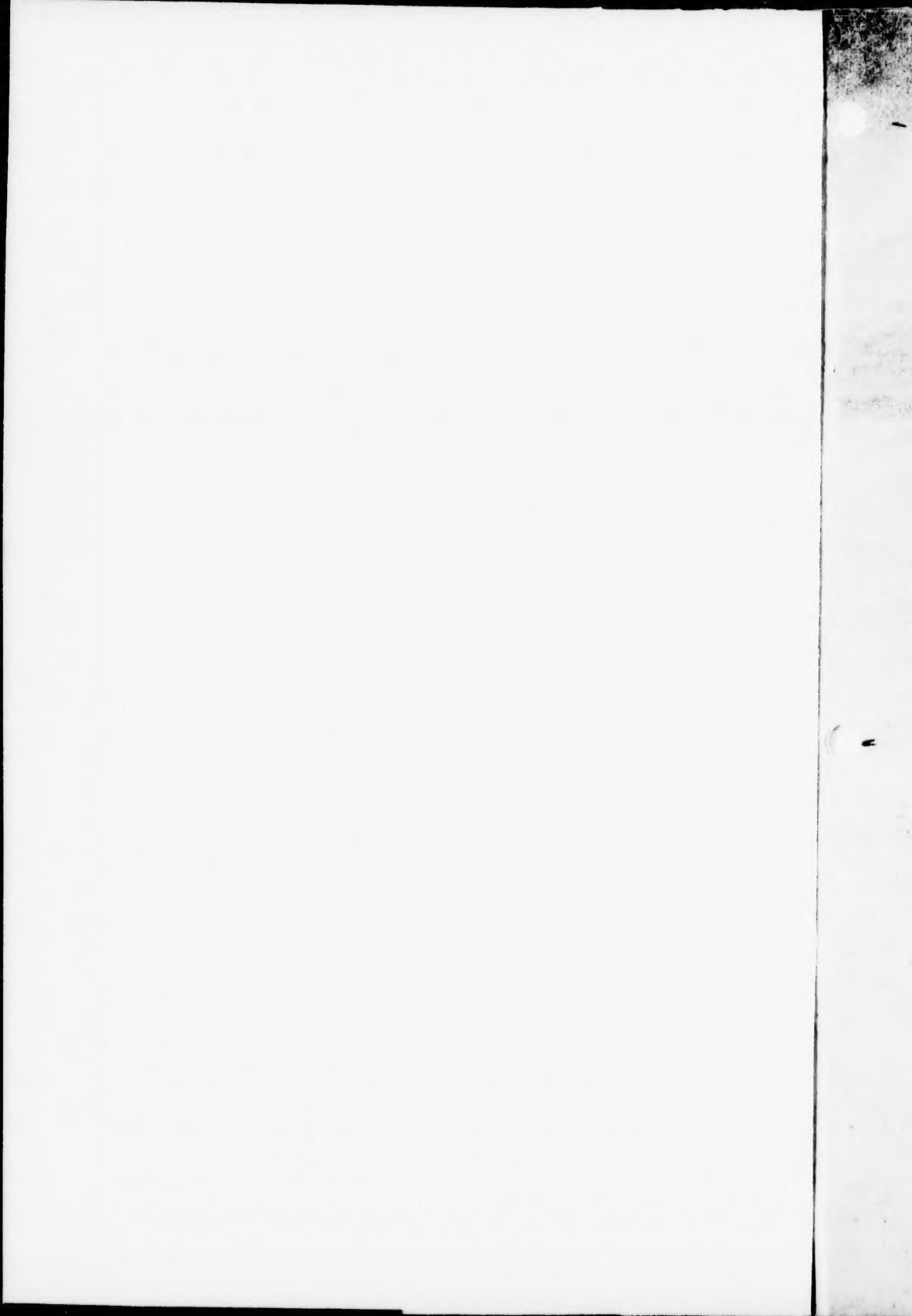
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ORATION:

DELIVERED AT THE INAUGURATION OF THE

NEW MASONIC HALL,

ON GOVERNMENT STREET, VICTORIA, VANCOUVER ISLAND.

On MONDAY, 25th JUNE, A. L., 5866,

—BY—

BRO. THE REV. THOMAS SOMERVILLE, A. M.

CHAPLAIN TO VANCOUVER LODGE, NO. 421, ON THE REGISTRY OF THE
GRAND LODGE OF SCOTLAND, AND TO VICTORIA LODGE, NO. 783,
ON THE REGISTRY OF THE GRAND LODGE OF ENGLAND.

COLONIST AND CHRONICLE PRINT.

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Presented by G. H. Slater
Jan. 1941.

TO

**J. W. POWELL, Esq., Past Master of the Day; ROBERT
BURNABY, Esq., Right Worshipful Master of the Day;
N. I. NEUSTADT, Esq., Senior Warden; and LUMLEY
FRANKLIN, Esq., Junior Warden of the Day; and the
Brethren of the Masonic Lodges in**

VICTORIA, V. I.

THIS ADDRESS.

DELIVERED AT THE

Inauguration of the New Hall,

On the 25th JUNE, A. D., 1866,

AS NOW PRESENTED BY THEIR OBLIGED BROTHER,

THOMAS SOMERVILLE.

BELoved BRETHREN :

In consenting that the following address should be printed, I have simply sacrificed my wishes to yours. Since you deem that it may prove an acceptable memorial of an occasion so interesting, and strengthen the cause of Masonry, I place it entirely at your disposal. I present it in the exact form in which it was delivered. I do this not from want of desire to amend it, but from the same reason which prevented me from preparing it more carefully at the first—want of time, amid the pressing duties of my vocation.

I am,

With all Fraternal Regard,

THOMAS SOMERVILLE.

WORSHIPFUL MASTER AND BRETHREN :

Truly it is my desire that another more experienced in the mysteries of our Order had been appointed for this duty. I have only consented to address you that it may be shown in practice what we assert in theory, that none may refuse the work appointed by the Masters.

The Dedication of the Lodge is one of the most solemn ordinances of our ancient order, and I am certain that as these holy symbols stood unveiled in their new resting place, and your thoughts wandered back through the corridor of ages to the scene of their first introduction, and forward to the rich associations that will be entwined around them in the future, thoughts deep and hallowed could not fail to well up from the springs of your heart. Be it simply mine, then, as one for all, to voice forth these your silent reflections.

The work completed to-day is called "The Dedication of the Lodge to the Holy Saint John," the patron of our order: But strictly speaking the work has a double purpose—both dedication and consecration. The Lodge is dedicated to virtue, in the name of the Great Jehovah, and consecrated, separated and set apart to the purpose of preserving the memory of these illustrious names.

It is dedicated to virtue. True masonry is the dutiful daughter of Heaven. The Lodge is the sacred shrine of Almighty Jehovah. By his law every mason must be a good and true man—true to himself, his fellows and to the Being before whom he has bent in adoring reverence. The "stupid Atheist or irreligious libertine" may make himself a false man, but never a good mason. The mason is pledged to pious virtue. Nor let be forgotten that virtue originally meant valor. Among the old Romans the most valorous man was esteemed the most virtuous; now while strength should not be all, it must still form an important element of goodness. The good man must ever be a strong man. Mere sentimentalism is silly; like the vapour it appeareth for a little while and then vanisheth away. In every "good and true man" there must be a healthy firmness. The feeling of desire must be yoked with the principle of right, and will must drive them both.

Rugged strength and radiant beauty,
These were one in nature's plan,
Humble toil and Heavenward duty,
These will form the perfect man.

To virtue, strong and beautiful, is this Hall dedicated. Never then let careless feet defile its pavement, nor unclean hands touch its vessels; never let angry disputations be heard within its walls. Conscience as a faithful Tyler must guard off the Furies of Discord. Temper must be ever tempered and feeling chastened. It is that we may become better men that we meet here, and all our labours—the charges, the rituals, the ceremonies, nay, every jewel and ornament, every article of furniture, every emblem and hieroglyphic, tend to this point.

But more, the Lodge is consecrated to the memory of St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist; and it is proper that we should shortly recall to our minds their lives and labours. Right too, that their names should have been linked together, not that they were like each other, but just because they were widely different in their temperaments and teachings. They were the exponents of the two extremes in human character—the Baptist being the representative of fiery boldness, the Evangelist of shrinking love. The one was a sturdy Doric column, the other a graceful Corinthian pillar. The one was the complement of the other; united together they combine strength and beauty.

The Baptist was a truly heroic character. The last of all the prophets, he was the greatest of all. Of his life we get only a few glimpses, but these show us what sort of man he was. The first picture is that of an ardent youth among the solitudes of Israel's deserts. Saddened by the hollowness of life in Israel and perplexed with the controversies of Jerusalem—the wrangling of Sadducees with Pharisee, of formists with mystic, of the disciples of one infallible Rabbi, with the disciples of another infallible Rabbi, he fled for refuge to the wilderness, to see if God could be found by the earnest soul that sought him alone. For thirty years he lived in the desert; then came the time when the qualities nursed in solitude burst forth upon the world. The people felt that a King of Men stood before them. The desert swarmed with crowds; warriors, profligates, publicans, the heart broken—the worldly, the disappointed—all came. Even the King's attention is gained; he is taken away from the simple life of the desert and placed among the artificialities of the Royal City. And now comes the question, "Does the stern prophet degenerate into a sweet tongued courtier." Is the rough ashlar of the forest broken into pieces in the process of polishing? Verily no. He stands in Herod's court, the prophet of the desert still, preaching boldly the truth. When Herod would ally himself with his guilty mistress, he at once said, "It is not lawful for thee to have her." Now is he struck down like an eagle in its flight. The last picture is that of this earnest, strong man cast into a dungeon by the guards of the King. There he wears out his restless soul, until sacrificed to a courtesan's whim.

May his name ever remind us of courage in the hour of trial and inspire us with fortitude to reprove sternly all departures from Masonic rule.

None have ever had more of the essential spirit of Masonry than St. John the Evangelist. He was the principle of love personified. Love was the secret of his religion, the burden of his teaching, the substance of his life, and the promise of his heaven. Whether we behold him leaning on his Master's breast, or wandering as a teacher among the nations of the East, he was the living illustration of his constant theme. His, too, was a love not easily quenched; he was persecuted, imprisoned, banished, tortured; but his love survived his trials. His life was love. Hear him, when old and feeble, writing to his disciples, "He that loveth his brother abideth in the light; he that hateth his brother walketh in darkness." Such was the man.

May his name inspire us with his spirit, so that our labours in the Lodge below may prepare us for the rest in the temple above.

Brethren, the service in which we have this day engaged and the symbols upon which we have gazed must have brought vividly to mind the high antiquity of our Order. And this thought let us cherish; it will add dignity and lustre to our pursuits. It is impossible not to feel the spell of long prescription in some degree. The Jew cannot but feel proud that the blood which fired Abraham's bosom still runs in his veins; the Greek, wandering among the beautiful groves of his native land, cannot but reflect with pleasure on the time when the fathers of philosophy assembled there their pupils, and the poet's song waked rapturous applause in the neighbouring theatres; the modern denizen of Rome, when he sees the eager strangers throng its streets and spoil its temples, feels the emotion of pride as he reflects that the time was, when the queenly city, seated securely on her seven hills, gave laws to their barbarous forefathers; the representative of Great Britain, gazing upon his country's flag in the land of the stranger, feels it all the dearer to his heart when he remembers that for a thousand years it has braved the battle and the breeze, and numbers up the many hard fought battles over which it has floated; the worshipper in an ancient church has all the more attachment to it when he considers that the walls of its cathedrals are now grey with years, and that for centuries has gone up to the Most High the same sacred song; and if any cherish this feeling, surely may we, when we search the records of Masonry and look back upon its existence even beyond the period of these records. "The sources of the noblest rivers which spread fertility over continents and bear richly laden vessels to the sea, are to be sought for in wild and barren tracts, incorrectly laid down in maps and rarely explored by travellers." Far back in the dim and hoary past, beyond the period of authentic history lies the origin of Masonry. We do indeed catch glimpses of it as it rolls along near to the fountain head, yet when we first clearly behold it, it bursts upon our eyes as a broad, deep river, well defined and beautiful. There can be little doubt that long before the Christian era, the mountains of Judea, the plains of Syria, the deserts of India, and the valley of the Nile were cheered by its presence and fertilized by its current. Nearly three thousand years ago there were in Asia the Dionysian architects, a great

corporation who undertook and even monopolised the building of temples, stadiums and theatres, recognized each other by signs and tokens, were possessed of certain esoteric doctrines, and called all other men profane, who were not admitted to these mysteries. Of these were the cunning workmen sent by Hiram, King of Tyre, to aid in the erection of the temple 1000 years before the Christian era. Here it is that Masonry first meets us in strength and beauty. In the construction of this magnificent edifice, 113,000 men were engaged under 300 overseers, and its building occupied seven years. And surely that day when the first temple was completed, must rise vividly before the minds of us assembled within the last consecrated. It was a great and joyous day in Jerusalem. Wearily had they waited whilst it gradually rose up towards the skies, and now the capstone was brought forth with shoutings. The multitude of the people thronged the courts and stretched away down the streets to the very walls of the city. Attracting every eye, crowning the summit of Mount Moriah stood the temple with its lofty columns, and beauteous towers and gilded roof, sparkling in the pure sunlight of heaven—the chosen dwelling place of Jehovah—the joy of the whole earth, and the visible symbol of that other not made with hands. Within it were placed the brazen altar, and the golden altar, and the other vessels that had been in the tabernacle. In the Holy of Holies placed they the mercy seat and the ark, and within that the moral law written on the tables of stone and delivered long before to Moses amid the thunderings of Sinai. Then, as it has been said, “did Masonry go forth bearing upon her brow the name of Jehovah, in her bosom a jewel of living radiance, and in her hand the key that unlocked the gates of immortality. For more than 2000 years has she been telling man of a Being brighter than the stars, and endless as eternity.” Before the victorious son of Philip marched his phalanxes, or ever Romulus walked by Tiber’s stream, had she been telling man how to live and how to die. Oh! surely it is something to boast of, that her language has rolled from so many tongues—that her altar fires have been kindled for so many centuries—that her beneficent works have been performed by so many hands. To remove her landmarks and her handmarks, the ancient buildings and the cathedrals, those *chefs d’œuvre* of the middle age must be razed to the ground, even to the last stone; for everywhere in the floor, the pavements, the columns, the mouldings, and the roofs, the masons, the sculptors, and the architects have left their marks. Thus high and honorable is the prescription in her favor. Old she is, but there appear not yet the signs of senility. Mighty her works in the past, but there gather not the manifestations of weakness or weariness. Time has written no wrinkle on her spotless brow. In the virtues of her children, she ever renews her youth. In her purification from profane appendages, she ever strengthens her stakes. In the distribution of the civilised races she ever lengthens her cords. Her lessons and her precepts—those grand moral *flora* of the universe—are of perennial growth. As they bloomed in Pales-

tine, they bloom in this, the farthest west. As they were with Solomon and our fathers, so are they with us; and as with us, so shall they be with our children's children.

Of such thoughts are we reminded by the Lodge and the Dedication Service. Turn we now to the living stones of the temple—the members of the craft. As a society of men, we assert the dignity of labour, the Harmony of Union, and the Wisdom of Organization.

We assert the dignity of labour. Activity is demanded, inaction and sloth proscribed. The high vocation of man is to be the fellow-worker with God. The vitalities of the universe are of God, the instrumentalities are of man. The Great Architect has laid out for us a plan and richly covered the earth with material, but man must work it to its end. Even Paradise had to be dressed, and though the earth were all to become as fair and fertile as the primeval abode, the neglect of a single generation would throw it back to a weary waste. God has sown in society the seeds of government, of science, of art; but man must develope and apply them. The laws of taste for instance are innately planted within us, but it is the chisel of the sculptor and the pencil of the artist that give embodiment to these laws in the noble temple and the magnificent picture. In everything man's labor is the complement of the Creator's bounty. "*Laborare est orare.*" Work is truly religious, nay, labor is life.

"Nature lives by action;
Beast, bird, air, fire, the heavens and rolling world,
All live by action; nothing lives at rest
But death and ruin; man is cured of care,
Fashioned and improved by labor."

These truths are too often forgotten. They have in some measure been slipping away from the present generation—that looks upon work as degrading. To look upon our platforms and our exchanges where men most do congregate, one might think that the chief end of man was to talk, to buy and to sell—not to work. In the midst of all this does Masonry assert the dignity of labour. Originally a fraternity of practical builders, in later days the work is of a speculative nature; still, however, the motto is "a fair day's wage for a fair day's work." Honours are given to the diligent, the drones are discouraged in the busy hive, and in many ways she asserts the dignity of man's primeval duty.

Your presence here also asserts the Harmony of Union. The Lodge is the world in miniature. From east to west is its length, from south to north is its breadth, from earth to heaven is its height, and from the surface to the centre of the terraqueous globe is its depth. And in few places can this conception be realized so well as here. At the ends of the earth we draw material from all the earth. What a variety of races, nationalities, creeds and religions are here represented! We have the Jew, long identified with Masonry, forgetting his exclusiveness in communion with his brethren—the Italian from the sunny south, joining hand with the exile from Old Caledonia, the "Ultima Thule" of his forefathers—the

Saxon from the good old German stock, sitting in fellowship with his sprightly neighbour from the joyous land of France. The Englishman and the American forgetting each their jealousies, and rejoicing together in liberty, equality and fraternity. Nor are the Colonists awanting. Here the Canadian meets the Australian, and here Nova Scotia and Vancouver Island intertwine their branches—all living stones in the building, bound together by the cement of charity, all forming a fit symbol and type of the time.

"When man to man the world o'er,
Shall brothers be for a' that."

Furthermore, we assert the wisdom of organization. There may be a union which is not a unity. The atoms in a sandpit are close enough together, but they do not form a unity. There is no unity in a flock of sheep, it is simply the repetition of so many things similar to each other. In an organized unity all the members are properly subordinated each to another, and the parts harmoniously arranged in their suitable relations. The body of man is an organization where all the different parts, head, heart, finger, fibres, and limbs severally conduce to a common good and depend on each other. Now, Nature has not intended us to be like a flock of sheep, near each other and yet distinct from each other; we are to be organized. A common interest is to flow as the lifeblood through all. As men rise in civilization; there appear the higher and finer developments of combined relations. In savage life men are slightly organized. The tribe is simply like a flock of sheep. The kingdom or the empire is the result of experience and refinement. It says much for Masonry that its common name has become "The Order." To quote from an illustrious member, whose memory is deservedly dear on this Pacific coast—the manly and large hearted Thomas Starr King:—"How Masonry reflects to us or rather illustrates the wisdom breathed by the Great Architect through all nature! It is said that order is Heaven's first law; it is no less true that it is Earth's first privilege. It is the condition of beauty, of liberty, of peace. Think how the principle of order for all the orbs of heaven is hidden in the Sun. The tremendous power of his gravitation reaches thousands of millions of miles—and hampers the selfwill—the centrifugal force of mighty Jupiter, of Uranus with his staff of moons, and of Neptune. There's a Grand Lodge for you, in which these separate masters are held in check by the Most Worshipful Grand Master's power. Nor is it any hardship that these separate globes are so strictly under rule, and pay obedience to the Sun. Is it not their chief blessing—their sovereign privilege? What if the order were less distinct and punctual? What if the force in these globes that chafes under the central rein, and champs its curb, should be successful for even a single day? What if the earth should gain liberty against the pull of the sun? Beauty from that moment would wither, fertility would begin to shrivel. The hour of seeming freedom would be the dawn of anarchy; for the Sun's rule is the condition of perpetual harmony, bounty, and joy."

"The idea of this Heaven determined order, is committed to our body through its Worshipful Grand Masters, Master, Wardens, Deacons, and Craftsmen. The proper regard for it has preserved it amid the breaking up of old empires, and maintains it in its mysterious, symmetrical and sublime proportions. It is the source of its living vigor, and the promise of its future strength."

Finally brethren, we read that when Solomon had finished the Temple, he besought that the presence of the Lord would dwell there. May this enlivening presence ever sanctify our fellowship! What of our beautiful house and our service without that? What of the altar without the altar fire? What of the richly ornate casket without the jewel within? What of the Mason without Masonic principle? He is only as the dead among the living—a rotten stone in the building. Our Masonry, brethren, must either be a real thing, or an awful sham, a thing to be laid hold of and nailed down to the counter by the detector and hater of all shams. Am I to respect the bad man, because forsooth by forswearing himself, he has gained the secrets of the craft? Shall I prefer the man who has tried to hide his rottenness with the garments of light? No brethren, I will endure him—I will try faithfully to perform my vows to him, but it is not in human nature to restrain my contempt for him.

Masonry is the daughter of Heaven; let us who wear her favors, never soil them on the earth. Invested as we are with these ancient and noble badges, let us walk in the light and not in darkness. With clean hands and right spirits—with an eye of compassion for the tear of sorrow, with an ear ever open to the cry of the distressed—with a hand ever ready to help the widow, and the orphan, and the stranger, let us show to the world the inherent nobleness of our order. Thus may we go on from strength to strength, and at length be admitted into the presence of the Supreme Grand Master, and receive the password to celestial bliss.

The words of that old Masonic marching hymn, lately quoted by Carlyle in his address to the students at Edinburgh, should ring upon our ears:

The Mason's ways are
A type of existence,
And his persistence
Is as the days are,
Of men in the world.

The future hides in it
Gladness and sorrow;
We press still thorow,
Nought that abides in it
Daunting us. Onward,

And solemn before us,
Veiled, the dark portal,
Goal of all mortal.
Stars silent rest o'er us,
Graves under us silent,

While earnest thou gazest,
Comes boding of terror,
Comes phantasm and error,
Perplexes the bravest
With doubt and misgiving.

But heard are the voices;
Heard are the sages,
The worlds and the ages,
Choose well! your choice is
Brief, and yet endless.

Here eyes do regard you
In eternity's stillness;
Here is all fullness;
Ye brave to reward you;
Work and despair not.